

The New Spider Web Dresses by Lady Duff Gordon

LADY DUFF-GORDON, the famous "Lucile" of London, and foremost creator of fashions in the world, writes each week the fashion article for this newspaper, presenting all that is newest and best in styles for well-dressed women.

Lady Duff-Gordon's Paris establishment brings her into close touch with that centre of fashion.

Lady Duff-Gordon's American establishments are at Nos. 37 and 39 West Fifty-seventh street, New York, and No. 1400 Lake Shore Drive, Chicago.



Net and a Fichu of Rich Silk Embroidery Are Combined in This Gown of the Lightness of Summer Air.

By Lady Duff-Gordon
(“LUCILE”)

GO to the spider, ye purchasers of gowns. Consider her work and be smart.

That is always a beautiful gown that suggests the spider web. The arachnid resemblance is a mark of beauty. Arise early to-morrow and walk in a garden or park or along the river side. That web of silver stretched across the pink radiance of a rose, or that shelters the cool green of leaves, is one of the loveliest sights you encounter. A spider's web is one of the loveliest objects in nature.

On this page are shown three creations inspired by my study of a spider's web. In color, in form and in texture, they hark back to the fair mesh woven by an arachnid spinner in the sun.

Nothing softer nor more pliant than a spider's web exists in either nature or art. Its nearest correspondence in fabrics is chiffon. Indeed, chiffon may well be termed spider web cloth. It drapes gracefully about an object. It falls easily into lines of loveliness. It, to use an expressive American term, “stays put.” Of the same family of cloths, as it were, are the crepes, tulle and the many varieties of nets. The middle figure has utilized crepe of a rich texture. It falls as softly about the figure as a spider web, detached from some of its points of fastening, clings to the nearest twig. A voluminous spider's web dress it is, you see, with something of the dignity of a Roman matron's wrappings.

More bouffant is the robe in the upper corner that was inspired by the tiny spinner. Of net is this one fashioned. As you see, it is of firmer substance. Gathered full about the bodice, the fulness is finished by a ribbon border at the hem. The simple bodice is rendered more elegant by a fichu of Oriental embroidery of heavy silk and of many colors. The three-quarter sleeves are arranged in wide ruffles of the net.

Of chiffon is the third gown. I had in mind not merely his work, but the form of the spider himself, in the creation of this costume. Note that the contour follows in the main the outlines of his energetic little body. The plain short bodice, of dark silk, emphasizes this resemblance to the upper part of his round frame. The lace petticoat is spider-like in its lightness. Even to the head dressing I have carried the spiderly suggestions of exquisite lightness.

To avoid the monotony of one color upon the tallest figure I have added broad bands of silk of a lighter color.

In general, the lighter in texture a garment is the greater its beauty. Practical conditions forbid the prohibition of broadcloth and its heavy and durable sisters. The spider web frock would be an anomaly on the street. There will ever be gowns of firm foundation for what may be termed the coarser uses of life. For example, heavy trousers suits are in excellent taste for women workers in the industries. The strictly opaque serges and gabardines are of pre-eminent utility for street wear. They are formal and utilitarian, as some worthy persons we know, and as necessary in the scheme of life. They are indispensable.

But for actual beauty these stuffs that follow the lines of the figure as the shadow follows the sunlight are beyond question. Even in wools there are materials that have weight and the dignity that usually accompanies weight, but that are soft and have the clinging quality of the oft-quoted vine. Duvetyn of the better sort is an example of these exquisite wools.

Manufacturers are recognizing the beauty of the spider web. They are considering his ways, and are making materials that are not merely durable, but that have the quality of grace. Once it was necessary to choose between service and grace. Now it is possible to combine both attributes in dressing. Even the light gabardines of the Spring and Summer suits indicate both.

Not Only the Texture of His Web, but the Form of the Little Spinner Himself, Is Exemplified in This Creation.

An Evening Robe That Has the Graceful Lightness of a Spider's Web and the Stateliness of the Attire of a Rich Matron of Old Rome.